



KATHLEEN VINEHOUT

STATE SENATOR

Testimony in Support of SB 465 Assembly Committee on Transportation Thursday, March 11, 2010

The consequences of drunk driving are far reaching and affect the lives of many Wisconsinites. In the last 4 year, the families and friends of the more than 1,600 people who died in alcohol-related accidents were forever changed by this preventable tragedy.

According to the Wisconsin DOT, our state has the highest rate of drunken driving in the nation. DOT also reports that approximately 40% of all fatal traffic crashes and 50% of all fatal motorcycle crashes in Wisconsin were alcohol-related.

Thankfully many Wisconsin tavern owners participate in the SafeRide program to ensure their patrons don't become a statistic.

In my district alone, the SafeRide program ensured that 8,796 bar patrons got a free, safe ride home. The 2008-09 SafeRide survey reported that statewide 53,859 people took advantage of this important and successful program.

The success of the SafeRide program is due to the commitment of tavern owners, the Wisconsin Tavern League and the Department of Transportation. They work together to administer and promote awareness of the program.

Today I ask your support for Senate Bill 465, which I authored with the support of the Department of Transportation and the Wisconsin Tavern League.

Under current law, tavern owners participating in the SafeRide program receive a grant from the DOT to cover 50% of the cost to transport a person safely home. SB 465 would increase the permissible grants from 50% to 80% of the transportation cost. This important change in reimbursement will allow the program to increase ridership by 30%.

This bill has no fiscal impact. State funding for SafeRide comes from a surcharge on all OWI convictions. Last session, the Legislature increased the OWI surcharge making more dollars available for SafeRide grants. This money may only be used for alternative transportation from Class B licensees to a customer's home.

Tavern League members volunteer countless hours to organize and sponsor various fundraisers to provide their share of the SafeRide funds. I applaud their dedication to the program and to helping keep our roadways safe.

I hope the committee will take positive action on SB 465 and help more people make the responsible choice to not drink and drive.



ANN HRAYCHUCK
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

March 11, 2010

**Testimony of Rep. Ann Hraychuck
Before the Assembly Committee on Transportation
Regarding Senate Bill 465**

Good Morning, Chairman Steinbrink and committee members. I appreciate having the opportunity to share this testimony with you about Senate Bill 465.

Senate Bill 465 increases the grant amount that can be awarded to any county, municipality or non-profit organization for their participation in Wisconsin's Safe Ride Program. The Safe Ride Program encourages these entities to cover the costs of transporting, from a bar to a residence, a person who is too intoxicated to legally drive.

Current law allows the Department of Transportation to award Safe Ride participants a grant which covers 50 percent of their operating costs. This bill would increase that grant amount to 80 percent. This bill is supported by Wisconsin's Department of Transportation.

Just last year the Tavern League of Wisconsin Safe Ride Program provided over 50,000 free rides home to patrons. They estimate that this reimbursement percentage change will allow their program to increase ridership by about 30 percent.

For a state that struggles with high drunk driving levels, increasing support for this program offers a much safer alternative to individuals who may normally get behind the wheel when they have had too much to drink. This program is particularly important for rural communities, like my own, who do not have access to public transportation.

Again, thank you for taking the time to hold a public hearing on Senate Bill 465.